



The Centraal Bureau Statistiek is attempting to answer that age-old question “Where did my money go?”

“Na Unda mi Placa ta Bai?” is a question asked in every language in the world, particularly a few days before payday, as many examine an empty wallet because their money could not reach from one paycheck to the next. Aruba’s Central Statistics Bureau has launched a campaign to try to understand this pressing question, as more and more families and individuals face this problem regularly.

During a press conference on Wednesday morning Martijn Balkestein, Deputy Director of the CBS presented past findings of such a study giving an idea of where Arubans are spending their money and introduced the task force that will be conducting the present one over the months of April and May. 600 families and individuals representing a broad spectrum of the Aruban population in have been chosen from all barrios of the island. They will be given detailed questionnaires and a daily expense book to evaluate their spending habits. A member of the task force will guide each group tested in filling out the forms and keeping a daily record of each and every expenditure. The study, which has been conducted in the past, should give the evaluators a good idea of how Aruba’s diverse make-up of ethnic and economic population deploys their income.

Mr. Balkestein gave some eye-opening results of some preliminary studies that revealed changes in spending over the last ten years that could offer some answers. One notable statistic was that there was a 224% increase in the amount spent on take away meals and beverages from 1981 to 1998, and it is expected to see an increase since the last study. This information directly ties into the increase of obesity, particularly amongst the youth, that has doctors and health organizations so concerned. Interestingly enough, the past studies showed a two decreases; the expenditure for meat, fish, poultry and other foodstuffs, which can also relate to the purchase of prepared foods, and a decrease in expenditure for public transportation, which may mean that more people are driving their own cars. It is the interpretation of the statistics that will be provided by the study that give a social insight as to how the population is handling their earnings.

This Income and Expenditure survey will take place from April 2 until the 27th of May, and will determine the list of products to be used when calculating the consumer price index. The final results should yield a better view of the development of the prices of products, the expenditures of households in connection to this and the change in the spending power of the population.

Privacy is guaranteed by the CBS to all the tested households, and all information gathered will remain anonymous. For employees of the CBS it is a punishable offense to pass on individual information to any person or institution, so cooperation with the task force conducting the survey is encouraged.

If any household is visited by one of the members of the CBS conducting the service, they will find them clearly identified by a badge, and if you have questions, information can be obtained from the CBS at telephone #583-7433.